

Feature by **Amelia Thorpe**

essential guide to...

outdoor living

A beautiful alfresco living space can feel like an extension of your home – whether it's a cool, shady retreat or a sun-drenched patio for entertaining.

Perfecting our interiors is one of the first challenges we undertake when moving into a new home but we often forget that the garden needs just as much consideration. Think about it as an extra room – how would you like to utilise the outdoor space? If not as a purely decorative feature or somewhere for the family to play, do you long for a relaxed open-air living or dining area? Would you like an outdoor fireplace or built-in barbecue for balmy evenings? Or maybe a tranquil water feature or pool for hot days?

For the ultimate entertaining spot, link your inside and outdoor spaces to create a natural extension. Says Martin Gill, Managing Director at Poggenpohl UK, "Making the most of the often sporadic summer means integrating living, kitchen and dining areas with our outdoor space so they flow seamlessly into one another."

Wide, sliding or folding glass doors from the living area or kitchen to a patio will create the illusion of a larger indoor room, especially if both are built on the same level and include identical features. Alternatively, a contrasting table and chairs will create a laid-back and romantic Provençal feel at which to dine while admiring your surroundings.

To escape from the stresses of daily life, why not set up a calm retreat in a shady corner? You could install a hanging chair on which to curl up for a lazy read, or even a summerhouse hideaway for enjoying that best-selling novel in quiet seclusion.

Plus, if you've plenty of space, you might desire a pool surrounded by smart loungers. Be aware, however, that this will require regular maintenance and a great deal of initial disruption. Research the sizes, styles and options open to you and get a few quotes before making a final decision.



left Chill out with your favourite tippie and a good book on the hanging Jasmin swing in wrought iron. Strong enough for two, expect to pay around £2800, at Fletcher & Myburgh. **Tel: 01420 588008.** www.fletcherandmyburgh.co.uk

above Made from woven synthetic yarn and steel for a wicker look but weatherproof all year round, the Cordoba lounge costs £492, at Lloyd Loom. **Tel: 01775 712111.** www.lloydloom.com

right This contemporary dining area is a natural extension of the house thanks to a light lacquered maple FG366 table that has been produced to order, as part of the complete kitchen behind the glass doors, priced from £20,000, at Poggenpohl. **Tel: 0800 298 1098.** www.poggenpohl.co.uk



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additional concerns

- Unless you enjoy midnight swims or regularly work outside, it's unlikely that you'll require a great deal of practical lighting. Instead, focus on creating an ambience that will enhance the area.
- Temperatures can turn chilly as evenings draw in so ensure you have a heat source, such as an outdoor fireplace, to keep guests comfortable.
- Don't forget about landscaping – a perfectly designed garden can differentiate zones, add privacy where needed or create drama, as well as infusing the air with a delicate fragrance. Talk to a professional if you're uncertain of where to start.
- Unite indoor and outdoor spaces with identical furniture, designs and flooring. Choose materials that are easy to look after and built to last. You'll be able to relax without worrying about upkeep.



left Create a seamless flow between inside and out with full-width sliding glass doors, as shown on this bespoke glass studio. Prices available on application, at Apropos. **Tel: 0845 434 8901.** www.apropos-conservatories.com

above A quiet spot for contemplation, this oak summerhouse has locking windows and doors, plus a drop-down day bed and writing desk. The Reading Room costs £9495, at Scotts of Thrapston. **Tel: 01832 832366.** www.scottsofthrapston.co.uk

left By garden designer Luciano Giubbilei, this outdoor fireplace incorporating Cathy Azria's Bonfire sculpture is ideal for when temperatures start to drop. Prices are available on request. **Tel: 020 7622 2616.** www.lucianogiubbilei.com
Tel: 020 8964 5355. www.bd-designs.co.uk

useful information

The **British Association of Landscape Industries (BALI)** has a list of members who specialise in all areas of landscaping, from tree work to fencing. **Tel: 0870 770 4971.** www.bali.co.uk

The **Society of Garden Designers** has registered members who can advise on design, plus specialist elements like lighting, water features and furniture. **Tel: 01989 566695.** www.sgd.org.uk

SPATA, the **Swimming Pool & Allied Trade Association** offers information and a list of approved installers of swimming pools. **Tel: 01264 356210.** www.spata.co.uk

